

Suffolk
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John Childs

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ANTICIPATION:

OR, AN ACCOUNT

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PREVIOUS TO THE MEETING

OF THE

HIGH-CHURCHMEN IN THIS COUNTY,

(Suffolk)

OF THE BUSINESS TRANSACTED THERE,

IN OPPOSITION TO THE

DISSENTERS,

WITH THE SPEECHES AT LENGTH.

The King of France, with forty thousand men,
Went up a hill, and then came down again.

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ANALYSIS OF THE

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ANTICIPATION, &c.

AN advertisement having appeared in the public papers, requesting the Gentlemen of this County, who are inimical to the Repeal of the Test Laws, to assemble; and the public curiosity being greatly roused, to know why any opposition should be made to an act of common justice, the following anticipated account of the meeting, being the *earliest* we could possibly procure, is humbly addressed to all enquirers.

The first business, perceiving themselves to be a body *without a head*, was to elect a Chairman. *SIR JOHN MOUSE, of Bigotry Hall, in this County,* was proposed; but it being desirable to have a person of respectability for this occasion, and it being observed that he had on a *turned coat*, the proposal was received with a hiss!!! which disconcerted the Baronet so much, that many people have reported, though without truth, that he blushed. He only hung down his head, cursed his coat, and those who advised him to turn it.

A considerable hubbub ensued for some time. The Gentlemen most deserving the Chair, universally declined it; for the conductors of the business

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had

had set it too *high* for any *moderate man* to be comfortable in it. At length the Rev. Dr. MONOPOLY, *Rector of Purbblind cum Swallowall*, ascended the Chair, and called the assembly to order.

The names prefixed to the advertisement which called the meeting, being read over, a few Gentlemen answered to them. Among the rest, Mr. FAIRPLAY, of *Brotherhood*, who, in the name of many others, desired to be informed, by whom the advertisement was drawn up, and especially who dared to put to it his name, and the names of several more, as though they approved of, and desired a meeting which they entirely abhorred; as tending to excite alarm where none was necessary; and to continue oppression upon those, whose conduct never did, and whose principles never could, deserve it.

No one chose to avow himself the author of so shameful an imposition; but the sneaking looks of certain persons near the Chair, betrayed at once the consciousness of having done, the meanness of not daring to avow, and the weakness of not being able to defend it.

Dr. MONOPOLY, to put an end to their embarrassment, addressed the Assembly as follows:

Gentlemen,

It is with pleasure I perceive, when our glorious Constitution in Church and State is threatened by a set of contemptible enthusiasts, that so many noble, so many reverend, so many learned, and so many wealthy Sons of the Church, are willing to stand forth in her defence. Indeed the surprise would have been, if on such an alarming occasion, there had not been a large company. When the honour of Diana of Ephesus was at stake, when the

the Craftsmen were on the point of being ruined; the whole city ran together, in defence of their established religion; and shall not a similar spirit possess us on an occasion so similar. Were Paul himself to assault our holy Mother Church, I would oppose him; and, no doubt, the Spiritual Court would give heavy damages. The Ephesians would not so much as hear the defence their opposers wished to make. Are we less zealous than a pack of Heathens? Why should the Dissenters be heard? They can say nothing. Has not the Parliament determined it over and over again? How restless! How ambitious!—Are they wiser than the Parliament? Do they think they know better than all the Gentlemen of the House of Commons, and all the Lords, with the Reverend and Right Reverend the Bishops? What would they have? Have they not liberty enough in all conscience? Don't we tolerate them too much? Are not they suffered to neglect the Church, and have as many conventicles as they please? Are not our Churches quite thinn'd for want of them? Don't they crowd to their Meeting-houses like rooks to a ploughed field, and leave us to deliver our reiterated discourses to the bare walls? Believe me, Gentlemen, they have too much liberty, and that makes them idle. They want Pharoah among them; somebody who would not care a straw for their murmurings. They would have these acts repealed. They would pull down these bulwarks of our poor Church, and tumble our steeples about our heads. Can you bear to think of it, Gentlemen? My Reverend Brothers; does not the idea turn you, who are red like crimson, white as wool? They want to tear our lawn sleeves to pieces; to filch away from us our tythe-

pigs; to burn our Common Prayer Book; to abolish our Articles, Creeds, and Homilies. They would leave us nothing but the Bible for our faith; nothing but the good opinion of our parishioners for our foundation; nothing but their voluntary subscriptions for our maintenance. They want to be Aldermen and Justices! What narrow-minded magistrates should we then have, if people of such nice consciences were in office? The whole land would be filled with Dissenters. At present these glorious acts block up every office of trust, honour, and emolument, from them; but if they were repealed, every office would swarm with them. Beside, Gentlemen, they are an insignificant set; their numbers very few; and they have no men of property among them. It is never worth while to listen to so small and inconsiderable a people.

They are, moreover, a very turbulent and factious community, quarrelling for nothing. What should they separate from the Church for, but mere stiffness and self-will? I have been in the Church for 30 years, and have never seen one thing amiss in it. What is it but turbulence that makes them now so active? Assembling here and assembling there, and uniting to give the more weight and efficacy to their efforts; I wonder these men are not ashamed to meet, and write as they do. Did not they cut off the head of Charles, the blessed Martyr, the Head of our Church; let them answer me that? And is it fit they should ever be trusted again? Did not they revile and prohibit the Common Prayer Book? Did they not strip all the Bishops? And shall such men assemble and correspond, and pass vigorous resolutions? Gentlemen,

I am

I am glad to see so many of you together to-day. I hope you will heartily unite with me in some gentle-resolutions which I have drawn up, in hopes of saving Church and State from utter ruin.

RESOLVED,

That Dissenters are enemies to Church and State.

That too much lenity has already been shewn to them.

That it would be for our peace and comfort if there were no Dissenters suffered.

That we will oppose Dissenters, to the utmost of our power, in every thing.

Mr. ORTHODOX and Mr. CIVIS immediately rose, and both of them seconded the motion of Dr. MONOPOLY; but being informed there was no motion before the Assembly, the Dr. having only read his resolutions, they sat down again.

Major CULVERIN then arose, and said, the Dissenters are all a pack of mean, cowardly scoundrels; I wish they had spirit enough to rebel, that I might have the pleasure of cutting some of their throats; as to hearing what they have to say, or reading what they publish, I never did, nor I never will. What resolutions you are come to, Gentlemen, I don't know; but I am come to this resolution, to oppose people who don't know how to obey; but are always talking of their rights, and their equality, and patriotism. Such sort of gentry cannot make good soldiers; and if so, I don't know what they are good for. I only wish the Mutiny Act extended to them, and I was on their Court Martial; my test should be a cat-o'nine-tails, and they should take it every morning. I think that act would suit their Corporations.

Dr.

Dr. MONOPOLY again said, that he had drop'd his notes, or should have remarked in its proper place, that the Dissenters are a very illiterate, enthusiastic people. He could produce a dozen quotations from their writers, full of the grossest absurdities. They are an heretical set; besides they all endeavour to subvert the main doctrines of our Church, and deny our most essential articles;—he therefore moved his first resolution; but

Mr. FAIRPLAY then begged to be heard: Having declared, said he, my disapprobation to the meeting, I find myself obliged to declare also my reasons; since in a question like this, it is not declamation, but argument, which should weigh with persons of liberal and generous feelings. Whatever are the prejudices of this assembly, I trust no one will avow himself an opposer of justice, or willing to oppress the innocent. I stand up as a Member of the Church of England, and a warm friend to our present happy constitution; yet, while sentiments of piety and freedom beat in every pulse, and animate every power of my soul, I profess myself a friend to the Dissenters in their present application, and an enemy to those acts which have so long disgraced our Legislature, and profaned the solemnities of our holy Religion.

I ground my detestation of the Corporation and Test Acts upon the following circumstances:

They deprive innocent and worthy persons of honours, profit, and livelihood.

To punish without a crime is the height of oppression: When we read the cruelties of Nero or Caligula, what is it makes us shudder? Is it the execution of some flagrant criminal? No, we see him led to the torture, or the stake, with pity indeed

deed for the man, but without horror or detestation of the act. But when the innocent Pœtus, and the beautiful Arria are deprived of those joys which they have never forfeited, and of that life to which their conduct does honour, then not only pity, but horror; not only grief of the fact, but detestation of the tyranny; abhorrence and indignation against the tyrant, move the bosom of the husband, the father, and the patriot. The present race of Dissenters are denied the rights of men, the joys of friendship, and the feelings of parental tenderness; are equally with the vilest criminals, subjected to fines, imprisonment, and outlawry; without being guilty of any crime, nay, for refusing to be criminal; for acting according to their consciences. That very conduct which shews them to be men of integrity, and worthy of office and honour, is unjustly made to wrest from them deserved rewards, and disqualify them for every station, after which honourable emulation may be supposed to pant. Who will say that Dissenters are not as worthy of offices as Churchmen? Yet they are excluded; but let these very men basely deny their consciences, and turn hypocritically to that holy table, where every hypocrite seals his damnation, and these very Dissenters are received with open arms. The rewards withheld from integrity, are basely bestowed upon profligacy and dissimulation. Is the exploded doctrine of infallibility claimed by a Church so enlightened as ours? I would become a Dissenter myself, could I think it possible. If not, can difference in sentiment from a Church allowed not infallible, be a crime? A crime unpardonable! A crime punished worse than many of those enormities which disgrace humanity! Yet thus are the Dis-

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senters treated, though allowed innocent; though known to be worthy, they are branded as infamous, and punished as criminals of the blackest dye. This is unjust, and with all my power I oppose it.

I am actuated in my opposition by another motive: The laws in question are injurious to the state, rendering a body of fellow-citizens, who are respectable in number and principles, who are willing to exert themselves for their country's good, and steady in that conduct to which their noble principles conduct them, of smaller value to the state than their brethren. If a multitude of people is the glory of a kingdom; if in a multitude of Counsellors there is safety; if the glory, honour, wisdom, and prosperity of a nation, is the aggregate of the glory, honour, wisdom, and prosperity of individuals; then ought the abilities, the courage, the strength, the wisdom of every individual, to be encouraged to exertion; and those acts which confine, depress, or neglect the powers of any part of the nation, especially of such part as the Protestant Dissenters, are acts injurious to the Community. Who would suppose himself benefited if any member of his body, his arm, or even his finger, were confined or amputated? Who can suppose the body politic does not receive rather injury than good, when any member of it is debarred from those situations which he could fill with usefulness and honour. Regarding these acts in a light so injurious to my country, I conceive myself bound to desire their repeal.

I observe, further, they are singularly oppressive; not only as denouncing punishment upon those who have committed no crime; not only as disgracing persons merely for integrity; but as
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hurling vengeance and destruction, beyond all bounds, not of criminality, for there is none, but of propriety and justice if there was.

A man called by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, who know and approve his private character; or selected by his Prince, who desires his public service, is, for accepting the call, for officiating in his duty, wherein he injures no one, nor behaves either morally or politically ill, is deprived of all that is dear to the human heart. If you see a man turned out of his house, torn from his family and friends, having his property seized, and his family, perhaps, reduced to beggary; himself haled to a loathsome prison; to pass, possibly, the whole remainder of his wretched life within it's echoing caverns; would you not suppose the man a murderer; one that had seduced and violated the chastity of some unsuspecting innocent; that had plunged a dagger into the domestic felicity of a Parflow! If he were, he deserves not a single emotion of pity; but what emotions does he deserve; what emotions will every generous breast feel for him, when informed that all his crime is, he has neglected to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as a qualification for a civil office, which his conscience (whether well or ill informed is no matter) tells him is to profane an holy solemnity, and awfully to affront his Maker. The generous will wish such a man deliverance; the most ungenerous will wish him every alleviation; that his friends, by legacy or gifts, if inclined to it, may relieve him; *but he is forbid to receive either*; that the delightful office of superintending his children may be allowed him: No; for a crime like *this* his natural rights and feelings as a parent are rent asunder; *he may not be guardian to his own*
C *child;*

child; and should his nearest friend or kinsman desire to leave his affairs to him, as a man whose integrity is uncorrupted, this also is prohibited, *he cannot be executor to any person*. Is this justice? Is this equity? Is it not violence, oppression, and worse than Turkish despotism? Every heart I trust, every feeling heart will join with me in execrating such a law.

The acts in question too, however depended upon as a bulwark, are very inefficacious, either as a means of selecting officers, or protecting the constitution. Can a test, which keeps out men of principle, and admits rascals, do any community service? Is it better to put in office a man who disregards his Bible, and all the glorious or awful truths it contains; who can prevaricate with God; is it better to admit him, than one whose conscience disapproves the 20th Article of our Church, and who absolutely acts according to his conscience, and cannot be persuaded to violate it's sacred authority, by promises or threats?

If in selecting it is useless, is it in protecting more beneficial. Does it protect either Church or State, to keep Justices and Aldermen, Excise Officers and Tidewaiters, Churchmen. What good can Churchmen do in such situations? What harm could the most rancorous sectary effect, with the highest powers such offices can give? To suppose this notion wants a moment's refutation, is to affront the understanding of this Assembly.

It is in Parliament, and there *only*, that any alteration in the Constitution, or in the Church, can be effected; and while Dissenters are safely admitted there, it betrays a weakness, of which I will not suppose any who hear me capable, to imagine that injury can arise from those offices, to
which

which the acts in question relate, being trusted in their hands.

It is the power of making laws, not of seeing them observed; the power of laying taxes, not of collecting them; the power of supporting fleets and armies by supplies, not the commanding a company or a frigate; the power of altering the Liturgy, not the refusing to repeat it; which can either injure the Constitution, or give real alarm to the Church. The former power has been allowed Dissenters, without hesitation, without damage. Why should hesitation be used to the latter, where no damage can ensue?

There is one circumstance yet behind, which, I persuade myself, every serious Clergyman will regard with horror equally with myself; I mean the profanation it occasions of the Holy Supper. Every Minister of Jesus, who regards his Lord's authority and honour, must have seen, with infinite regret, how often his authority has been despised, and his honour insulted, by the forcible introduction to his table, of persons who would have been cast from any other table with indignation. If there is any thing sacred in Christianity, if there be any thing peculiarly holy in the institutes of our divine Redeemer, it is this solemnity. The impropriety, the criminality, of abusing this rite, above all others, must strike the serious mind with anxiety and grief. The glory of Christ's ordinances is the spiritual presence of himself in them; but how can he draw nigh with complacency? How can he look to the holy altar, when there the pearls of the Gospel are given to swine? What an object for HIM is the soul of a man, divided between the consciousness of allowed guilt, and the solemn work of such a day; between the avaricious desire of worldly

worldly advantage, and the self-condemning horror at the means he uses to procure it! The man himself is an object of pity, having hunger on one side, and sacrilege on the other, to torment him. Surely the Minister who officiates is an object of equal pity; to stand in the name of Christ, and give his body and blood to one whom in his conscience he believes Christ abhors. One to whom Christ has forbidden him to give any thing, but a denunciation of those curses which await the ungodly. And what a farce, for infidels to jeer at, is the whole transaction! To give that which is holy unto dogs, is no little crime.

To put holy things to common uses, is profanation; and to pollute this ordinance, by applying it to purposes never intended by its divine author, is a profanation of the basest nature. To be obliged to act a part in such profanation is a hardship from which every conscientious Minister will endeavour to be delivered. The company of persons so notoriously vile, is a burden from which every serious communicant must wish to be relieved. Let every serious communicant, let every conscientious Minister join with me. I trust, this Assembly will be unanimous in endeavouring to obtain a repeal of so profane a law.

The impression made by this speech of Mr. FAIRPLAY was very visible. A murmur of "I think so indeed," was beginning to run through the room, when Mr. CLOSE, of *Keepall*, begged their attention to a few words.

Gentlemen, Mr. FAIRPLAY's speech was fine, to be sure, very fine; but do not let us give up our best concerns for a fine speech, Gentlemen. What Dr. MONOPOLY said at the opening of the business weighs more with me than any thing I
have

have since heard. Being a limb of the law myself, Gentlemen, I may be believed when I affirm, that possession is eleven points of the law, and in good hands, the twelfth also. Now in the case aforesaid, a man without a fee can clearly perceive, that the Dissenters want our places, and we must deserve a verdict of *Non compos*, if we should let them be obtained by default. No man will give up an estate if he can help it; at least, I am sure, no Lawyer will advise him to it. It would be a pretty sight to see Dissenters filling every office, and running away with all the loaves and fishes, Gentlemen. If Mr. Justice is a Dissenter, and Mr. Alderman a Dissenter, and Mr. Mayor a Dissenter, what will become of us then? A Churchman's chance for a place would be like an unstamped deed, of no value.

Surely the State has a right to chuse who it pleases, to serve it. While Churchmen are chosen, it is evident the right is used with prudence. Indeed, as Church and State are so intimately joined together, like man and wife, it would be unwise to bring in a competitor, which in time might produce a divorce.

Mr. Commissioner SMUGGLE observed, that if Dissenters, and such stiff, precise, and overconscientious men were admitted into places, and filled the Excise and Customs, no business could be carried on; and whether that would not be a great injury, he would leave to the consideration of any gentleman present.

Farmer HAWTHORN next said, I thinks I can see as far into a millstone as any blind man of ye all. This puts me in mind of an affair in our parish, when Mr. HIERARCHY and his friends inclosed the common, to keep the Dickey from biting the grass; every

every body at first thought it a main good thing; but when some of the parishioners found themselves shut out of what they had always had a slice of, it seemed to be not quite so pleasant. Sometimes one or two would jump over and get some; at last the injured folks agreed quietly to petition that the gates might be opened, since they had all an equal right, and used to have an equal share; but never believe me, if Mr. HIERARCHY did not roar so loud, and cry, Thieves! Murder! Fire! till he roused the whole neighbourhood; till there was as many come together as are here now. They all took his part, because why? Why because they all went snacks with him; at last the Lord of the Manor was applied to. Pho! Pho! said Dr. MONOPOLY, rising up hastily, 'tis all nonsense, Gentlemen, I beg you won't hear any more; Farmer HAWTHORN is a man that would rather give five guineas to a poor family, than one to pay his tythes; and the opinion of such a man cannot weigh with us, Gentlemen.

No, indeed, said Mr. SLY, *of Search'em*; it cannot be expected that such a man should gain any attention from Dr. MONOPOLY, or his Reverend Brethren; but doubt not Mr. CLOSE's arguments have considerable influence with them. What Dr. Monopoly told us of *St. Diana, of Epbesus*, tickles my fancy vastly; and since the *Demetrians* are a very numerous and powerful party, both in Church and State, (which you know are inseparably joined together) I think the issue of this meeting must be very hard on the Dissenters. They will call it persecution, and so let 'em; such as they are were always persecuted; the Apostles and their Master were Dissenters, and the Establishment did, as all Establishments will do, they cast an iron hand upon them. Let our Establishment imitate that Establishment,
and

and let modern Dissenters keep company with former ones. The days of Alfred are over; no man divides his loaf now, except among his own children. Besides, if Dissenters should divide with us places in Civil life, perhaps they might want to divide with us some of our pluralities, and who has got any of them to spare? It was quite right too, for the sake of peace, to prevent competition. If a new set were to begin business, and outshine the old ones, what jealousies and heart-burnings might arise, which every prudent person would endeavour to prevent.

This speech was followed by a general laugh; but whether those who grinned the widest, knew for certain what they jeered at, is very doubtful.

Mr. FAIRPLAY took the opportunity of a moment's silence to observe: I was in hopes, in such an assembly, to have heard something like argument; but am greatly disappointed, to perceive nothing but scurrilous declamation. The inference is obvious. I will just reply to a few objections, which indeed scarcely deserve it, but are so easily answered, that a child might manage the dispute.

The Dissenters opposition to Charles I. has been observed: Did not the wisest and best of men of those times oppose him too? Had he met with no opposition, where had been those Liberties from which sprung our present enjoyments, and that Religion, on which are built all our future hopes? Did not his sons, notwithstanding their father's fate, walk in his steps, till not only Dissenters, but Churchmen also were obliged to oppose the one, and detest the other? It has been said, that a long list of absurdities from their writings might be found. Can those expressions be deemed absurdities, which were the fashion and taste of the times? But allowing it, will not the writings of Churchmen afford

afford as long a list? If not, I fear their lives will amply balance every grossness, which envious observation, and malicious care, can pick out from the Dissenters.

We have been told, that if these acts are repealed, Dissenters will monopolize places of trust. How can this be? The repeal will not turn one Churchman out, nor put one Dissenter into office; it would still depend upon the approbation of their Sovereign, or their fellow-citizens, whether they should obtain any benefit whatever by it. Will you say, that their good opinion of Dissenters is so great, that their obtaining power upon the removal of these obstacles, is a real certainty? If not, what reason for alarm? And if it is so, why should persons so well approved, be proscribed as incapable and dangerous?

It has been asserted, that they all deny the main doctrines of our Church. This is a false reproach; of the three petitioning sects, two, the **Independents** and the Baptists, are as firm to those glorious doctrines, as the Church; and if among the Presbyterians are found some who differ, let us pity, let us pray for, and not persecute them. Differing from the Church cannot be more objectionable in a Dissenter, than in a Churchman; yet it is notorious, that many Clergymen disbelieve the doctrines alluded to, and vehemently deny in the pulpit, what the moment before they had delivered from the desk; an inconsistency with which no Dissenter can be charged.

Much has been said about the toleration which they already enjoy; has any injury arisen from it? If not, why should it not be increased? Toleration is a word which expresses pity, and must be grating when a MAN hears it applied to himself. Upon a subject

subject where all who have power to think, have also a right to think, it is absurd to assume merit from the mere giving them leave to enjoy their thoughts. With that vague expression, our Constitution in Church and State, has a cloud of dust been raised, seeming on purpose to obscure the argument.

Pray where is their connection found? Our Constitution consists of King, Lords, and Commons. Suppose for a moment these were all Dissenters; is not the Constitution as firm as ever, while the glorious principles of the Revolution are adhered to; which Dissenters cannot but firmly maintain? Would not the laws be as strong, and justice as truly administered; would not both Houses of Parliament be as independent and as honourable as now, were there not a Churchman among them?

I conclude with observing, that while the Romans and Sabines wronged each other, all was war and tumult; but when the privileges of citizens were extended, and they united together as brethren, then the State began to flourish, and Rome shone forth the mistress of the world.

By the time Mr. Fairplay had ended, there was hardly a Parson left in the room; Dr. Monopoly being taken with a qualm, desired leave to withdraw, for a breath of air, and a drop of brandy.

The Landlord then informed the company that dinner was ready, and with him came a troop of Waiters and Clergymen, from the kitchen. The afternoon was spent in great harmony, and the Doctor's four resolutions, served to light him as many pipes; the best use they could be applied to.

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THE FOLLOWING SONG,

Sung by a Reverend Gentleman, famous for such exertions, afforded considerable Entertainment.

Tune—*Come haste to the Wedding, &c.*

Come haste to this meeting, each weak head and bigot,
The Churchmen their zeal can no longer delay;
It foams from their mouth, like small beer from a spigot,
Come, catch as it runs, nor let aught waste away!

Come, come, one and all,

Attend to my call,

Whoever is purblind and loves to be led;

Come, see,

Av'rice and Bigotry,

Brew'd by Sacheverel long ago dead!

Come threaten and fight for the loaves and the fishes,

To catch which Dissenters are holding their paws;

Come, lend a good hand, or they'll all get their wishes,

And snatch ev'ry savory bit from our jaws.

Come, come, &c.

Come stand by your Church and your fam'd Constitution,

For both are in danger and likely to drop;

At least to report so's our firm resolution,

It answer'd before, and is now our chief prop.

Come, come, &c.

A fig for all argument, writing, and reason,

There's no way to answer, like—ceasing to hear;

If reply must be given, let's call it all treason,

There's more will believe, than examine; ne'er fear,

Come, come, &c.

So here's to the Church, may I lose a good living

But I will stand by her, while she stands by me;

Let's shut fast the door, and secure all she's giving,

And laugh, while Dissenters but peep through and see,

Come, come, one and all,

Attend to my call,

Whoever is purblind and loves to be led;

Come, see,

Av'rice and Bigotry,

Brew'd by Sacheverel long ago dead.

F I N I S.

